census UPDATE

www.abs.gov.au/census

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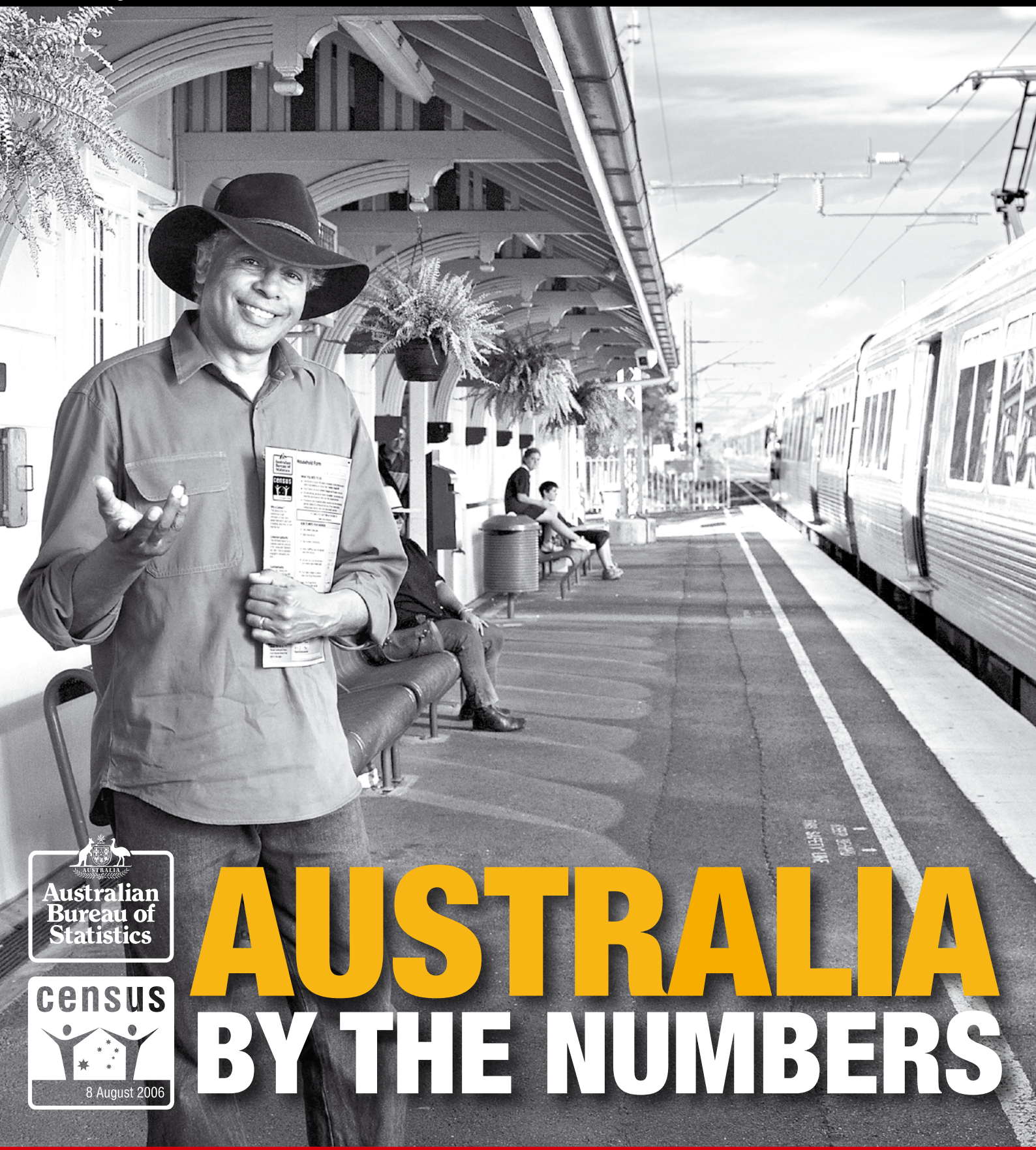

Australian Bureau of Statistics

census 8 August 2006

AUSTRALIA BY THE NUMBERS

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Australian Bureau of Statistics

census 8 August 2006

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census UPDATE

Census Update is a regular free newsletter from Corporate Communications at the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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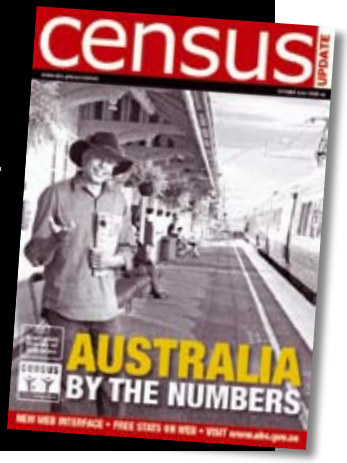


The 2006 Census has gone very well. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) would like to thank the people of Australia for their cooperation and support in ensuring a successful 2006 Census. We are also very grateful for the hard work of our Census Collectors who have been to every corner of Australia.

Image by Exposure Productions

Australians - people you can count on

THANK YOU AUSTRALIA

The participation from the public, along with the media reports and the feedback our Collectors have received on the ground, all point to a high level of support for the Census by Australians. There has been more public interest in this Census than any previous Census. We believe this is because most Australians understand that the Census is ultimately a useful tool for their community and by taking part they are in some way helping their community prepare for future needs. The information gathered on Census Night will provide critical information essential in building a better Australia.

Thousands of forms have arrived at the ABS' Data Processing Centre, which has responsibility for transforming the responses on the forms in to the data which will be used to create Census products and services for users.

The Census period also marked the launch of the new simplified Census web interface, giving users the chance to sample 2001 Census statistics via their new format. Take this opportunity to sample the new interface, designed to offer you superior access to Census data and metadata, so that you can become familiar with it before the 2006 Census data is released. Information sessions demonstrating 2006 Census products and services will be held in every state and territory across Australia during November and December of this year.

Read on to find out more about the counting of Australia and the 2006 Census products and services.

John Zammit handing a Parks and Wildlife ranger a Census form.

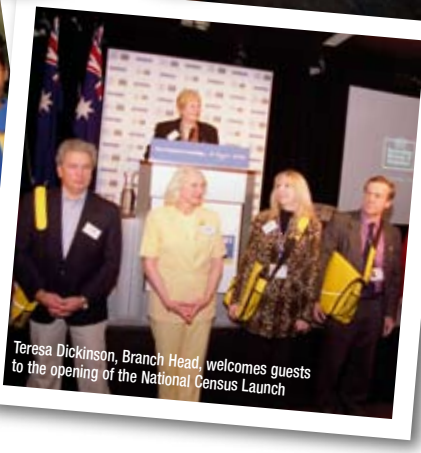
This image by Exposure Productions

CENSUS FIELD OPERATIONS A SUCCESS

The Australian Statistician, Dennis Trewin, singer, Casey Donovan and Ernie Dingo at the National Census Launch.

The Treasurer, the Hon. Peter Costello with new baby, wearing 'I just made the count' - Census t-shirt.

ABS's Indigenous Manager, Gowan Bush with Indigenous Assistants Samantha Fitzpatrick and Kerri-Anne Whap during the Indigenous recruitment campaign.



Teresa Dickinson, Branch Head, welcomes guests to the opening of the National Census Launch

The enumeration stage of the Census has been highly successful.

Planning for the 2006 Census commenced prior to the previous Census. It has been a long haul, including dress rehearsals in selected areas of New South Wales and South Australia in 2005.

However, Collectors did not make direct contact with the public until the month before the event. Distribution of forms for the Census began on 28 July, after the national launch. Census Night was 8 August and forms were collected from the day after. Most collection of Census forms ceased on 28 August, but collection continued in selected areas until mid-September.

People also had the option of completing their Census forms on the Internet - the eCensus.

Several new initiatives were introduced for the 2006 Census field operations, including the use of SMS messaging. Collectors were sent SMS messages when eCensus forms in their Collection districts were lodged. This let them know that they did not have to return to those households to collect a form.

National Launch

The national launch of the Census at the National Press Club in Canberra on July 24 was a great success. There was a large media turnout and excellent coverage across the nation.

Treasurer Peter Costello gave the keynote address and emphasised the vital role of the Census in the projection of population figures and national decision making.

The Australian Statistician Dennis Trewin also spoke. He said that the Census, conducted every five years, was a resource for all Australians. "It is important to the accuracy of the Census that everyone completes the Census form."

Television presenter Ernie Dingo, who featured in TV, radio and print advertising for the Census, was a special guest. The Census employed a small army of 30,000 Collectors and Supervisors Australia-wide. With their bright yellow bags, Collectors were the public face of the Bureau over the Census period as they delivered Census forms to every household in the nation.

Special Counting Procedures

Because of their special circumstances, some remote communities (especially Indigenous communities) were counted in the weeks before and after Census Night. The ABS' Indigenous Collection strategy recognises that people living in remote and traditional settings require different approaches to those used when counting urban populations. Collection in these remote areas took place over a six to eight week period.

The ABS is recognised internationally as having one of the best procedures for counting the homeless in a Census. For the 2006 Census the ABS continued to refine and improve upon the procedures which were first put in place in 1996. A range of organisations dealing with the homeless were consulted about strategies, procedures and promotional activities to be used for counting. This strategy has helped to ensure the Census obtains a good response from homeless people.

ABS staff worked with ethnic community leaders to help raise awareness and encourage participation in the Census. They were well supported by further PR activities directed at the many community groups and nationalities in Australia, as well as Indigenous Australians. A special Census Inquiry Service in Carlton catering for people speaking a language other than English received 25,000 calls during the Census collection period. The top five number of inquiries by language were: Mandarin (1,896), Cantonese (1,725), Vietnamese (1,547), Arabic (1,353) and Korean (1,097).

The ABS also put in place procedures to help those with a print or hearing disability complete their Census forms.

The Census Household guide was available on the website in audio (MP3), large font and as a web document. Audio versions of the guide and Census form were made available through Blind Citizens Australia.

In designing the eCensus the ABS consulted organisations such as Vision Australia and the National Information Library Service. Text was able to be resized and the eCensus form was made compatible with screen reading programs for the visually impaired, such as Jaws and Windows Eyes.

Counting procedures for these groups worked quite well. A further range of improvements are being identified for the 2011 Census

Census Inquiry Service

The main Census Inquiry Service in Geelong handled 460,000 phone inquiries over the Census period. The ABS handled this volume of calls by providing an automated system that dealt with the most common questions and issues up front, with the more complex calls being dealt with by an operator.

eCensus

The Internet Census worked well with a total of 775,856 households successfully completing their Census this way. This is about 9% of people who took part in the Census - or about 2 million people. ACT took most advantage of the new option, with 16% of people choosing to use eCensus. The eCensus inquiry number received 89,000 calls over the Census period.

There were several attempted 'denial of service' attacks by hackers on the eCensus system, but they were repelled. The security of the site was proven. Thousands of eCensus users have also provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing's online option.

Some of the features that will be retained on the Census page include the Media Centre, privacy statements, frequently asked questions about the Census and a list of supporters of the Census.

eCensus

A NET GAIN IN FORM PROCESSING EFFICIENCY

IBM application and hosting expertise helps ABS build the big picture faster with eCensus program

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has worked with IBM Australia to deliver the eCensus option, which was used by 9% of those filling out Census forms.

Usage of the eCensus application, designed, built and hosted for the ABS by IBM Australia, peaked between 8pm and 9pm on Census night, 8 August, during which more than 72,000 online forms were received. During the 24-hour period of 8 August, eCensus delivered more than 12.5 million page views.

Despite as many as 55,000 households logging on simultaneously (8.47pm on 8 August), the eCensus application delivered 100% availability through the Census' most busy period, from Saturday 5 August to Sunday 13 August. Average page response times remained below one second within the IBM environment.

Research on web-based Census initiatives points to several benefits compared with the traditional paper forms, including increased accessibility for the vision-impaired, reduced reliance on field collectors, fewer spoilt forms, as well as more efficient statistical processing.

Glen Boreham, CEO and General Manager for IBM Australia and New Zealand, believes the eCensus program will help the ABS more accurately measure key characteristics of the Australian population, and in turn allow for better planning of services and facilities across the country.

"This is the first time the Internet has been used to capture information about Australia on such a scale," said Mr Boreham. "Capturing data online has the potential to greatly reduce the Census' logistics burden, and to dramatically speed up the collection and processing of data."

"This innovation has the potential to save taxpayers funds and, in line with the purpose of the Census, to enable Australia's researchers and planners to better address the future needs of our community."

Assistant director for the eCensus project, Peter Clark, said: "The ubiquity of the Internet, combined with the information management and processing capabilities it enables, make eCensus a logical progression in the development of the Census program".

"The eCensus allows ABS to fully leverage the Internet in the task of building the national statistical resource and to define that essential snapshot of how Australians live," Mr Clark said.

"IBM's expertise in building and hosting secure, robust web applications around the eCensus was an important ingredient in helping us conduct the Census as a whole."

"The majority of feedback the ABS has received on this initiative from people completing their Census form online has been very positive."

Did you know

In 2011 it is possible that up to 50% of census forms may be completed online

For the first time in history, expeditioners wintering in Australia's Antarctic territory went online to complete their forms for Census night.

L-R: John Rich (Albany, WA) station leader; Trevor Jackson (Joondanna, WA) carpenter.

Photograph by Richard Urmonas

Ice age meets information age

The Census aims to count all people in Australia on Census night, with the exception of foreign diplomats and their families. Also included in the Census are those people outside Australia who are not required to undertake migration formalities, such as those on oil and gas rigs or on Australian Antarctic bases.

Taking advantage of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' new eCensus option, Census information from Casey, Davis, Mawson and Macquarie Island stations was collected in a matter of hours. Previously the paper Census forms could only be processed once they were physically shipped out on the summer resupply voyages at the end of the year.

For the first time in history, Census information from Casey, Davis, Mawson and Macquarie Island stations was collected in a matter of hours. Previously the paper Census forms could only be processed once they were physically shipped out on the summer resupply voyages at the end of the year.

National Head of the Census, Paul Williams, said the Tasmanian Census Management Unit and the Australian Antarctic Division began coordinating the logistical side of Antarctic Census count late last year.

"The materials, including Census Form Numbers, a sealed envelope containing an eCensus PIN number which gives access to eCensus and Census Personal Guides, left for Antarctica on the summer voyages between January and March 2006," Mr Williams said. "They were distributed by each of the four Station Leaders who took on the role of Special Census Collectors. In preparation for this they signed the ABS Undertaking of Fidelity and Secrecy."

To get the best possible picture of the population, the ABS goes to great lengths to ensure that all Australians are counted. The eCensus is making counting Australia easier, more cost effective, and allows for faster processing of Census information.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING *Ernie*

The recent field operations for the 2006 Census owe part of their success to the support of the highly effective public relations campaign.

A significant part of this campaign was the new approach the ABS took in advertising the 2006 Census messages.

TV presenter Ernie Dingo was selected as the focal point for 2006 Census advertising campaign.

The Australian Statistician, Dennis Trewin, said Ernie Dingo had a uniquely broad appeal across the entire Australian population "as he invites us to do our bit for Australia's future by completing the Census form."

Mr Trewin added that the selection of Ernie Dingo to present the Census advertising was consistent with the central communications strategy of the ABS. This involved a more "humanised" approach to getting out essential Census messages.

The ABS selected Euro RSCG Australia, who won a competitive pitch involving several agencies in November last year, as the advertising agency for the 2006 Census campaign. Their pitch featured Ernie in television, radio and print advertisements.

The success of the advertising campaign is evident from the results of the independent analysis undertaken in the lead up to Census Night. This analysis revealed that "the excellent levels of recall and recognition of the 2006 Census Advertising campaign suggest that the decision to use Ernie Dingo as the lead presenter in the advertising is very well vindicated as it has led to very good levels of interest and attention".

The 2006 Census advertising campaign was part of a comprehensive PR campaign for the 2006 Census. This included having Census PR managers for each state and territory. The campaign helped promote high levels of awareness among the public of the 2006 Census and its benefits.

EDUCATING CLIENTS - Census Information Sessions

Information sessions with Clients across Australia

User consultations have been an important part of the ABS' development of the online 2006 Census product suite. To date there have been two stages for this cycle, with Census staff visiting clients across Australia to seek their input on the proposed products and services.

To further extend this, a range of information sessions are planned across Australia late in 2006. Sessions held so far have received excellent feedback.

The main points of discussion at the information sessions will be:

- Our overall product suite for the 2006 Census
- The release schedule for Census data
- Our tables and their content
- Our Internet products (particularly CDATA Online and Table Builder), a demonstration on how they will work and information about how much a subscription to Table Builder will cost.
- Training and support options that will be available before and after data release. and
- The latest information on Census products and services available from registered distributors.

The ABS would like to extend an invitation to you to attend an information session so we can provide you with information on our product suite, hear your views and answer any questions you might have. Spaces are limited so contact us as soon as possible to reserve your place at your preferred session. Contact information is provided below.

We look forward to seeing you there.

The ABS will be holding information sessions covering the 2006 Census product suite in every state and territory in late 2006. To find out about the session closest to you visit www.abs.gov.au and follow the Census link. Alternatively, call Kris Leggo on (02) 6252 5124 or email marketing@abs.gov.au.

A TASTE OF WHAT'S TO COME...

Australian Bureau of Statistics

census 8 August 2006

Now is your chance to sample 2001 Census statistics via their new format.

Take this opportunity to familiarise yourself with the new simplified interface before the 2006 Census data is released.

What's available at the moment?

Quickstats - A quick and simple summary of key Census data relating to persons, families and dwellings.

Census Tables - A product that offers you the chance to obtain Census data in a single table for a specified geographic area.

Community Profiles - A series of profiles providing key Census characteristics related to persons, families and dwellings, covering most topics on the Census form.

More products for the 2001 Census will be available online in the future.

We'd like your feedback

This interface is designed to offer you superior access to Census data and metadata. Follow the feedback link located at the bottom of the interface pages to let us know what you think.

Don't miss out!

Visit www.abs.gov.au/census and follow the Census Data link to start accessing the new interface.

More than 300 people attended the inaugural Census Analysis Conference hosted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, held in Canberra on 18 and 19 July 2006.

Census users flock to CONFERENCE

The conference was designed to raise awareness of the analytical and research capabilities of Census data and was aimed at people who use, or should be using, Census in their everyday decision making.

Organisers had anticipated about 100 people would attend, but were pleasantly surprised to have underestimated the conference's popularity. Those attending came from many different employment environments across Australia. Attendees had the opportunity to hear from more than 40 presenters who spoke about their research using Census data, how it helped in their decision making and how the data could be used to help the community.

Some of the research presented related to: child health research; mental health research; natural resource management; education; vocational education and training; government service delivery; and, state budgets.

There was also information on: how local government uses the data; how Census figures give us a picture of the changing face of coastal areas; the ageing of our workforce; and how a charity uses Census data.

Invited speakers at the conference included: Dr Natalie Jackson (University of Tasmania); Professor Graeme Hugo (University of Adelaide); Dr Bob Birrell (Monash University); Associate Professor Chris Chamberlain (RMIT University), Mr David Mackenzie (Swinburne University); Professor Peter McDonald (Australian National University); and Professor Ann Harding (University of Canberra).

With a cocktail night, a conference dinner and seven exhibition stands to inspect, the two-day conference was a great networking opportunity and an ideal way to raise awareness of the capabilities of Census data. There was a lot of positive feedback from attendees. Due to the conference's success, it is planned that a Census Analysis Conference will be held every two-and-a-half years.

For the latest Census news and information, email census.users@abs.gov.au and type "add to Census email" in the subject field. You can opt out at anytime.

CENSUS ANALYSIS
CONFERENCE 06

Photography by Richard Lynch and Brenton Colley

Scenes from the inaugural Census Analysis Conference, hosted by the ABS

All papers and presentations from the Census Analysis Conference are available free on CD-ROM and by following the conference link on the Census web page. If you would like to receive a copy please email marketing@abs.gov.au. Numbers are limited so email today to learn more about how you can make the most of your Census.

PES provides indispensable information

The Census of Population and Housing aims to accurately measure the number of people in Australia on Census Night, their key characteristics, and the dwellings in which they live.

While every effort is made to count each person and dwelling once in the Census, it is inevitable that in such a large operation, small numbers of individuals will be missed while others will be counted more than once. Usually more people are missed than overcounted in Australia, so the Census count of the population would be less than the true population. This difference is called net undercount.

To measure net undercount the ABS conducts a Post Enumeration Survey (PES) soon after the Census. This sample survey aims to provide an independent check of the of the Census coverage (i.e the extent of the undercount of Australia's population). The survey uses a sample of around 38,000 dwellings (i.e. approximately half of 1% of private dwellings in Australia). In 2001, the PES estimated that the 2001 Census missed 1.8% of the people in Australia on Census night. However, rates of undercount can vary depending on factors such as sex, age, ethnicity (including Indigenous origin) and geographic location.

In PES processing, the information collected from PES dwellings is matched against corresponding Census forms for those dwellings to determine whether a person has been counted or missed in the Census, or counted more than once. Estimates of net undercount are then used to:

- derive an estimate of the resident population for 30 June of the Census year
- provide users with an assessment of the completeness of Census counts, allowing them to take this into account when using Census information
- evaluate the effectiveness of Census collection procedures so that improvements can be made for future Censuses.

Accurate resident population estimates are required for a wide range of uses, including the allocation to states and territories of seats in the Federal House of Representatives, the distribution of Commonwealth payments to states and territories, and demographic, social and economic studies.

More information about undercount and the methods used in the 2006 Post Enumeration Survey can be found in the Information Paper: Measuring net undercount in the 2006 Population Census, 2006 (cat. no. 2940.0.55.001), available for free from www.abs.gov.au.

Planning for the 2011 Census is already underway.

Towards 2011, the Next Census

Certain aspects of the census will not change, including

- universal coverage - every person in Australia will be counted
- place of enumeration collection - people will be counted at the place where they are staying on Census Night
- self enumeration - most people will fill in their own forms
- special enumeration strategies for harder to count groups will continue

Evaluation is currently underway on various aspects of the 2006 Census to assist planning for the 2011 Census. Tests, evaluations and recommendations from 2006 will all contribute to efficient and effective field procedures, form design and processing, and output for 2011. The ABS actively exchanges ideas and experiences with other statistical agencies on international best practice in the field of census taking. The aim is to understand and respond to social change in Australia, the evolving information needs of the community, and opportunities offered by new technology.

Some likely developments for the 2011 Census are increased promotion and use of the eCensus, associated with the anticipated increase in use of the Internet in Australian homes. It is possible that up to 50% of census forms in 2011 may be completed on line. It is also expected that an increased proportion of the population will opt to mail their forms back rather than having field collectors return to households to collect them. While nearly all the questions on the 2006 Census form are likely to be repeated in 2011, there is also likely to be increased demand for additional questions on particular topics.

2011 will mark one hundred years of the National Census in Australia. Planning has already commenced on ways to commemorate this historic and significant event in our history.

The Australian Statistician will be calling for submissions in relation to the 2011 Census in early 2008. If you would like to be notified of the commencement of the consultation period, please send you contact details to darran.holder@abs.gov.au to have your contact details added to the consultation list.

The Australian Statistician will be calling for submissions in relation to the 2011 Census in early 2008. If you would like to be notified of the commencement of the consultation period, please send you contact details to darran.holder@abs.gov.au to have your contact details added to the consultation list.

Mesh Blocks, the Geographical basis for statistical collection.

ASGC 2006 RELEASED

Geographical boundaries are designed and maintained by the ABS to ensure that data collections are comparable and spatially integrated. The ABS has released a range of reference products and information papers to help you understand the way that the geography is broken down, as well as upcoming geographical developments.

Statistical Geography Volume 1 - Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (1216.0) is the first in a series of three statistical geography publications relating to the 2006 Census and is available now. This publication describes the overall geographical breakdown in detail and has a chapter briefly outlining the plans for Mesh Blocks as the new central building block for geography. Volume 2 will focus on Census Geographic Areas across Australia (2905.0) and Volume 3 will look at Urban Centres and Localities (2909.0). These publications are planned for release between July and December 2007. For further information on Mesh Blocks, and to download the draft Mesh Block digital boundaries in MapInfo Interchange format please see Information Paper: Draft Mesh Blocks, Australia, 2005 (1209.0.55.001) on the ABS web site.

The ASGC Electronic Structures (1216.0.15.001) are listings of the codes and labels for the 2006 edition of the ASGC. This product is provided in text file format and is now available via the web.

The ASGC Digital Boundaries (1259.0.30.002) were released in July 2006. An Information Paper, Fact Sheet and Metadata Pro Forma are available for this product on the ABS web site. Boundaries for each level of the 2006 ASGC can be downloaded from the ABS web site in MapInfo Interchange format.

If you have any inquiries about the classification, contact the Assistant Director in Geographic Classifications:
Email geography@abs.gov.au
Call (02) 6252 5888
Write to Locked Bag 10, Belconnen ACT 2616.

1216.0 - Statistical Geography Vol.1 - Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), Jul 2006

1259.0.30.002 - Statistical Geography - Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), Digital Boundaries, 2006

1216.0.15.001 - Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) - Electronic Structures, 2006

1209.0.55.001 - Information Paper: Draft Mesh Blocks, Australia (Reissue), 2005

Where are the Disadvantaged?

SEIFA INVESTIGATES

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA 2001) allows users to investigate the socio-economic well-being of Australian communities and identify areas of advantage and disadvantage.

Derived from information collected in the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, SEIFA 2001 consists of four separate indexes - each detailing a different aspect of an area's social and economic wellbeing. SEIFA indexes are increasing to grow in popularity amongst Census users for research purposes.

Information on the relative disadvantage according to where people live can allow for better targeting of services and assistance and may be useful for policy formulation.

Research Paper *Analysis of the Regional Distribution of Relatively Disadvantaged Areas using 2001 SEIFA* (cat.no. 1351.0.55.013), released by the ABS, investigates the geographical distribution of disadvantaged areas across Australia. In particular, the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage is used to identify areas with relatively high proportions of people with characteristics associated with low socio-economic status.

This study found that there is an over-representation of disadvantaged Collection Districts (CDs) in remote areas. Only 2.7% of Australians live in remote or very remote areas but 13.7% of these are in disadvantaged CDs compared with 5.1% of people in major cities.

Two extremes were found within this study. Over 15% of people in the NT live in disadvantaged CDs and on the other end of the scale, less than 1% of people in the ACT live in disadvantaged CDs.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) 2001, a powerful analytical tool, is available as a standalone software package, an Add-On Datapack for CDATA 2001, or as a consultancy service. To learn more about SEIFA or read the Research Paper *Analysis of the Regional Distribution of Relatively Disadvantaged Areas using 2001 SEIFA* (cat.no. 1351.0.55.013) in full visit www.abs.gov.au.

Did you know

The number of females unemployed at the time of the 2001 Census was 6.6%. This figure was 18.6% in disadvantaged areas.

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Brisbane QLD 4001

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Adelaide SA 5001

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Perth WA 6842

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GPO Box 66A
Hobart TAS 7001

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GPO BOX 3796
Darwin NT 0801

ACT

Level 5
33-35 Ainslie Avenue
Canberra City,
ACT 2601

Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616

FOR MORE INFORMATION

WEB

Visit **www.abs.gov.au** and follow the Census link to check out new and future Census developments as they happen.

ABS STATISTICS ARE FREE ONLINE

EMAIL

Keep up to date with the latest Census news and information by emailing **census.users@abs.gov.au** and typing "add to Census email" in the subject field. You can opt out at any time.

PHONE

Call the National Information and Referral Service on **1300 135 070**.

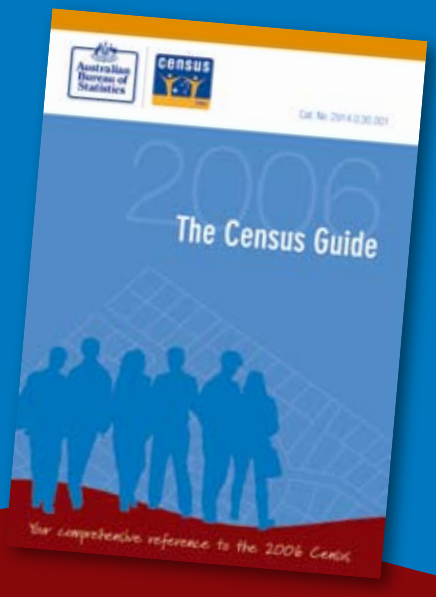
2006 Census Guide

OUT NOW!

Containing reference material and product information, **The Census Guide** is your comprehensive reference to the 2006 Census

This comprehensive reference contains:

- information about the 2006 Census online product range, using 2001 data
- reference material, including the Census Dictionary (2901.0), How Australia Takes a Census (2903.0), Fact Sheets and other Census Information Papers;
- information about Census publications and geography
- answers to frequently asked questions
- a release timetable for 2006 Census products.



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Available as a CD-ROM. To receive your free CD-ROM call 1300 135 070.